

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND BULLYING: A STUDY

SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

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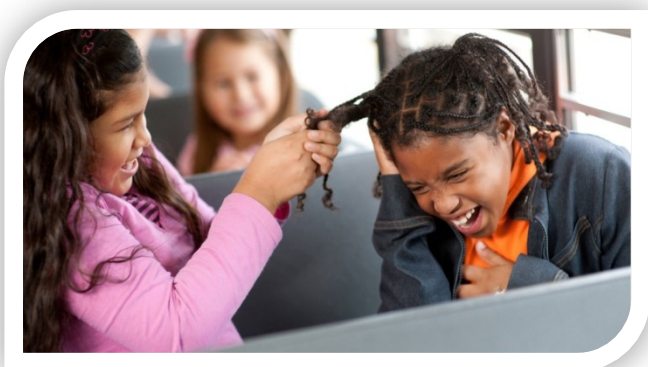
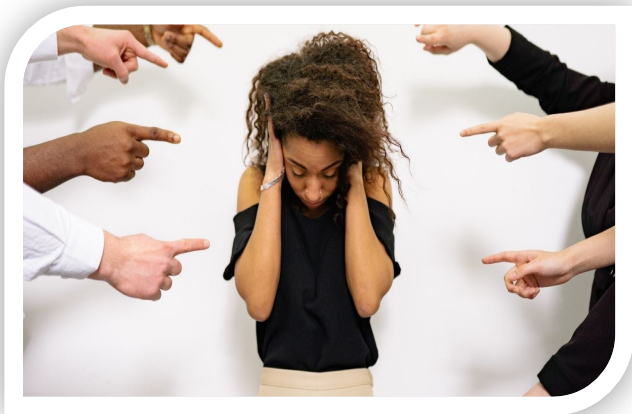
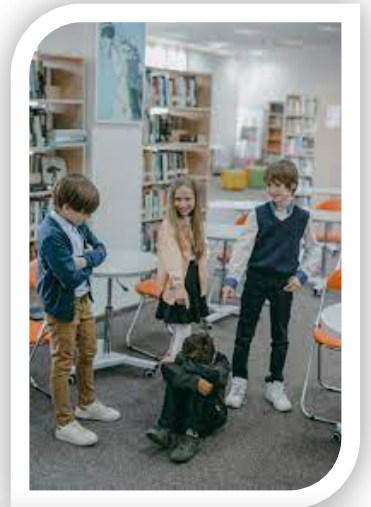
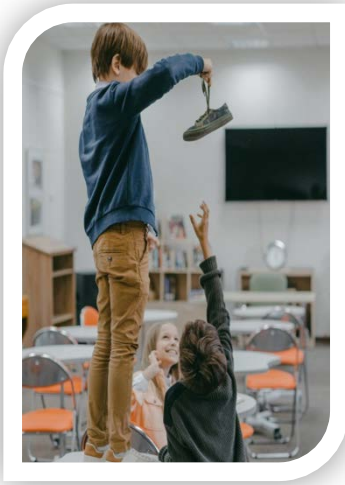
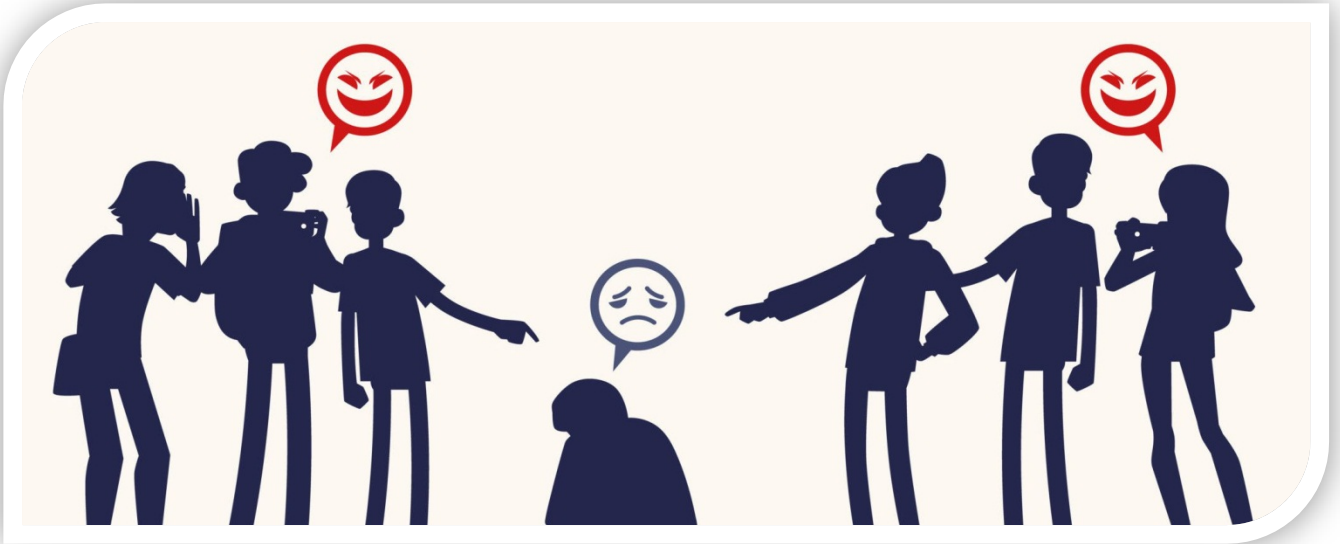
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SUMMARY

Introduction:

If we look at the problems of students in school, then along with various types of academic problems, one important problem is seen in the form of bullying, which is given less attention in Indian schools as compared to other countries in the world. Bullying in schools is an international issue that may negatively impact both kids' rights to learn in a fear-free atmosphere and the overall school climate. One of the most burning issues in the Education field is bullying. This has become a new phenomenon all over the world and this severe problem has occupied all the fields but in education, it has been plugged. The term bullying itself conveys a broad range of meanings. The Swedish Norwegian researcher who is the pioneer of research on Bullying says, "Bullying occurs when a person is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons and that negative action occurs when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through word or in other way. It is evident from previous research that bullying is a serious concern in the field of school education. This research was important to reveal the existing status of bullying in school education in Uttar Pradesh. This study has been conducted in Government Secondary level schools of Lucknow district the capital of Uttar Pradesh. The literature suggests that there are relatively fewer studies conducted in India as compared to other Western nations. No study regarding bullying among students with disabilities has yet been conducted in India according to the researcher's knowledge. The findings of the research will be helpful in understanding the strategies for helping handicapped students and bullied students to do better academically wherever they are enrolled. The results of the study are crucial in directing the process of reorganizing training initiatives and providing guidance to educators as well as other staff members on their responsibilities in fostering a study-friendly environment. The research contributed to the existing corpus of knowledge about the impact of bullying on students with disabilities enrolled in inclusive government secondary colleges in Uttar Pradesh.

Statement of the problem:

Students with Disabilities and Bullying: A study

Terms define:

Student with Disability: A student with disability, in this study, is defined as a student who has long-term mental retardation, hearing impairment, visual impairment, speech impairment, locomotor disability, multiple disabilities, and learning disability that, when combined with barriers, prevents him from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal footing with others.

Bullying: Bullying in this study refers to the process of physically, Verbally, Socially and psychologically harassing or putting an individual or group under stress with hostile intent by another individual or group repeatedly over time.

Objective of the study:

1. To Identify the Students with Disabilities. (SWDs).
2. To Identify the Bullied Students with Disabilities (BSWDs)
3. To make a personal profile of significant cases of Bullied Students with Disabilities (BSWDs)
4. To study and suggest the intervention strategies of Bullying.

Delimitation of this study: This study is limited to Government Secondary Schools of the Lucknow District only. This study was limited to 5 types of disability (Visual impairment, Speech Impairment, Locomotors Disability, and Multiple Disability) out of 21 types of disability.

Research Methodology of the Study: In general, the objective of this research was to study bullying cases but in specific, this study aimed to make a profile of significant bullying cases of disabled children in the Lucknow district. To conduct an depth study on bullying cases at the Schools. The case Study method was used for the present investigation.

Research Design: The nature of this research is qualitative and the researcher prepared a case profile of significant cases of BSWDs. So the researcher used a “Case Study Research Design” for this research. The aforementioned breakups of the diverse aspects that influence the research design selection can be used to discuss the importance of the chosen research design:

1. Based on the research problem.
2. Based on the personal experience.

3. Based upon the selected strategies of inquiry that is Interview and content analysis.
4. Based on the qualitative data analysis.

Collecting Data: The researcher in this investigation undertook individual interviews with each disabled student who had experienced bullying. The semi-structured questions directly and clearly tackled the issue of bullying. **According to Patton (1990)**, “Interviews are meant to help us understand the other person's point of view We interview individuals to understand their feelings from them that we are unable to see with our own eyes. Thoughts, feelings, and intentions are not visible to us. We can't see actions that occurred in the past.”. To prepare a profile of the BSWDs, the researcher conducted interviews of the BSWDs, on the interview schedule and documented the expert's opinion. However, the researcher collected the data from ‘one-on-one interviews’ and received the suggestions of experts by Email/telephone.

Population: The population of this study was SWDs who studied at government secondary schools in the Lucknow district and also faced bullying.

Sampling Method and Sampling Technique: Participants in qualitative studies should be selected purposively Cresswell (2012). So by the **Purposive sampling method** researcher selected the sample for this research. For identify the multiple disabled and learning disabled students researcher used convient sampling method.

Sample: During the identification of bullied cases, only those students who were involved in this study were disabled and also were bullied by their peers and others in their school. In all 32 secondary schools, 23 disabled students were identified. Unfortunately, 7 disabled students refused to participate in this study, a total of 15 disabled cases were found in which 10 disabled cases were bullied. And in these bullied SWDs out of 10 bullied cases 6 cases were identified as significant cases of Victim. So, the total sample of this study was 6 cases of bullied disabled students (BSWDs).

Tool used: the following self-prepared tool is used in this study

1. Identification checklist for disabled Students (SWDs)
2. Identification Checklist for Bullied Disabled Students (BSWDs)
3. Interview schedule for BSWDs.
4. Openniore for Experts.

Summary of the Review of the Related Literature:

The present review of related literature signifies the rationale of the undertaken evaluation, as well as suggests the key areas to focus upon, based upon the prior studies. Some of the studies have proposed the framework for this study. Kshirsagar V.Y. Agrawal, R. & Bavdekar S.B. (2007) reported that bullying was reported by 31.4% of students and no significant difference in the prevalence of bullying amongst boys and girls. 16% were physically hurt and only 24% of parents are aware that their children are victims. Rigby and Slee (1991) ascertain that one out of every ten children experienced bullying from their peers, with male students being more susceptible to bullying compared to female students. Carran, D. T., & Kellner, M. H. (2009) in their research paper students included more female students as victims than male students. Dutta G. et al. (2021) show that out of 921 participants, 32.4% were victims and 16.7% were bully-victim. Zablotsky, B., Bradshaw, C. P., Anderson, C., & Law, P. (2012) explain the children with developmental disabilities are more likely to be involved in bullying, and children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) may be more vulnerable due to social skills issues and friendship maintenance concerns. In comparison to children with other ASDs, children with Asperger's are more vulnerable to bullying. (Patel et al., 2020) the prevalence of bullying involvement was 70% (n=1529; 9.1% bullies, 18.6% victims, and 42.3% (bully-victims). The prevalence of bullies was higher in boys (77.5%) compared with girls (58.3%). The prevalence of victims was also higher in boys (67.2%) compared with girls (51%). In 2020, Kaflea, Dhakalb, and Kumari majority of participants (98.2%) in the study indicated that bullying happens in their school. Bullying was reported as light in 84.8 % of the respondents, moderate in 11.6%, and severe in 1.3% of the respondents. Of the participants, 82.3 % had experienced mild bullying, 15.2% had experienced serious bullying, and 2.4% had experienced severe bullying. In the Global School-Based Student Health Survey (GSHS) Nepal Bullying at school affected half of the kids (50.7%), with men experiencing the highest prevalence (55.7%). Nepal has the highest prevalence of bullying victims in the region Yadav, A. & Mehta D. (2015) show that in a classroom and a playground, bullying happens too much and there are two groups of bully children girls bully girls and boys bully boys. **Physical bullying** Borualogo, I. S., Wahyudi, H., & Kusdiyati, S. (2020) Most bullying occurrences take place in the school hallway and in classrooms. Okagua, and Opara (2015). 64.9% of the kids were

the bullies and 82.2% of the students were the targets of bullying. Roughly 9.7% and 11.8%, respectively, did not identify as bullies or victims. Furthermore, male students reported bullying at a higher rate (90.8%) than did female classmates (82.9%). When it came to student gender, 55.4% of female students identified as bullying victims, compared to 53.4% of male students who reported being bullied and 53.3% of those who identified as bullies. At 57.5%, physical bullying was more prevalent than the other forms of bullying. **Verbal Bullying** Nazir, T.(2019) in his research paper 25.8% of students were facing Verbal Bullying and there was no significant difference found between Socio-economic groups and bullying. Emotional bullying Rai, R., Binil, V., & Savitha (2018) said that Bullying was significantly associated with gender and area of residence and psychosocial well-being was significantly associated with family monthly income. Espelage, D. L., & Holt, M. K. (2013) their research paper shows that the male students and the older students faced more bullying. 75% of students were bullied by their peers. 20% of students have gone through clinical treatment. Naylor et al. (2006) revealed that verbal and physical bullying were the most common types, while social slavery was the least prevalent. Verbal bullying was found to be more prevalent among female students, whereas physical bullying was more common among male students. Additionally, the study found that 40% of bullies experienced symptoms of anxiety, stress, anger, and bad mood. Espelag and Holt (2001) revealed that the percentage of bullies in 6th grade was 10%, which increased to 14% in 7th grade, and further increased to 18% in 8th grade. The number of victims surpassed that of bullies, and victims also exhibited higher levels of depression and anxiety compared to bullies. Additionally, male students engaged in bullying more frequently than female students. As per previous research work Disability is usually the result of poverty, children with disabilities also lack self-confidence, and the review reveals that disabled children are victims of bullying. In a very simple way, it is related to their social economics and self-confidence status.

Summary of the theme:

Disabled students often face additional challenges in navigating social relationships and feeling secure in their learning environment(Yang-Hwa, 2015).(Burkhart & Keder, 2020) Students with disabilities, chronic health conditions, are at a higher risk of being targeted by bullies(Burkhart & Keder, 2020). Disabled students who are bullied may experience an acute sense of insecurity in their school environment. The literature

suggests that the experience of being bullied can have a detrimental impact on a student's willingness or ability to regularly attend school, as the effects of bullying can be far-reaching and disruptive to a student's overall well-being and academic engagement (Ismaili, 2014) (Sideridis & Alahmadi, 2023). Disabled students often feel most comfortable and accepted in peer support groups, where they can problem-solve, learn more about the school environment, form relationships, and avoid feeling socially isolated (Weiner & Weiner, 1996). However, research suggests that disabled students often feel their challenges are not well understood by staff, and they may struggle to access adequate academic accommodations and support services (Serry et al., 2017). In some cases, students are hesitant to share their struggles with their families, either out of concern for burdening their parents or fear of the consequences (Cordero, 2022). However, the authors note that the level of support available can be limited by the family's own educational and socioeconomic status (Sánchez et al., 2006). One of the key locations where bullying is commonly observed is in the classroom. (Τσίτσικα et al., 2014). Another area of the school that has been identified as a hotspot for bullying is the cafeteria or lunchroom (Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice, 2016). Bullying has also been observed in other common school spaces, such as hallways, bathrooms, and school buses (Nurhayati et al., 2020). One of the most common forms of bullying faced by disabled students is verbal bullying (Lodge, 2014) (Burkhart & Keder, 2020) This can include name-calling, teasing, and making derogatory comments about a student's disability. In addition to verbal bullying, disabled students may also experience physical bullying, such as pushing, shoving, or even physical attacks (Burkhart & Keder, 2020). Disabled students are also at risk of social and psychological bullying, where they are intentionally excluded from social activities or have rumors spread about them (Atkins et al., 2020). Bullying can affect every aspect of a student's life, including their academic performance, emotional well-being, and social development (Stanbury et al., 2009). Bullying can have a lasting impact on the lives of victims, even if they ultimately survive the experience (Ismaili, 2014). The consequences of bullying on students can be severe, leading to physical and mental health problems, substance use, and in some cases, even suicide. Tragically, the damage inflicted by bullying can shape the disabled student self perception, causing them to internalize feeling of worthlessness and inadequacy in short they loss their self-impotence (Ismaili, 2014).

Summary of each case:

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data, the following Case-wise conclusions were laid

Case 1 (A-1): It can be said that case one is suffering from the negative behaviour of peers and teachers. Due to this, she was feeling insecure in the school campus. She belongs to a low-income family group and she confronts verbal, physical, social and psychological bullying. Most of the time she is harassed inside the class. She reported that “The incidents that happen to her every day, Due to this she is unable to concentrate. She was suffering from group bullying. She felt socially excluded.

Case 2 (A-5): He has difficulty in speaking. His Father works in a restaurant. The family lives in a rental house. He feels insecure in school because no one likes to talk to him. It was found that he is a regular victim of verbal bullying. He stutters while he speaks so a group of students call him stammerer “Hakla” When he faces verbal bullying regularly he comes under mental pressure and his stammering increases in front of others and he becomes very aggressive and sometimes he starts fighting with them. He doesn't like to go to school because he feels alone in the school.

Case 3 (A-6): He was a multiple disabled student. He was blind in both eyes and he also had a problem in one of his legs due to polio. He was the single male child of his family. His Fathers education level was upper primary level and his mother's education level was primary. They were not very educated. He suffered from bullying on a regular basis. He was a victim of verbal, physical, Social and psychological bullying. He was also bullied by the school students they did not include him in any class activity. He was bullied mostly in the washroom. His family also considers him a burden and does not understand his words. Due to this, he does not want to live more.

Case 4 (A-8) She does not like school very much because her classmates make fun of her due to her blindness. She was bullied every day”. She is a visually impaired girl. Her parents are literate. But apart from her mother, father and brother and any family member does not like her. She is unable to share her feelings with anyone. She is very badly bullied by her peers, verbally, physically, socially and psychologically. Some of her classmates spread oil on the stairs which she uses to go to her class. She slipped badly her head severely injured. This type of act can be termed as physical bullying. But her determination to stand up for herself motivated her to study and after fighting with everyone she got admission to school which is helping her to move ahead in life.

Case 5 (A-18) He is a 19-year-old locomotor disabled student. The education level of his father is High school passed and her mother is 6th standard passed. Based on identification it has been proved that he is a sufferer of verbal, physical, social and psychological bullying. He does not feel secure in school. Due to bullying in school, his self-confidence has got low and he wants to quit his studies. Despite his determination to pursue education, (A-18)'s physical limitations and the persistent bullying he endures have significantly hindered his academic and personal growth. The lack of support from teachers and peers exacerbates his feelings of isolation and insecurity, impacting his mental health.

Case 6 (A-28) He is a learning disabled child. He is a sufferer of Dysgraphia. Dysgraphia is a neurological disorder and learning disability that affects a person's ability to write, His father is a graduate and his mother is 10th standard passed. Most of the time he is called by teachers and students "Murkh". He does not like school and dropped the class many times. He feels very angry at himself and hits himself and after hitting himself, starts crying and sometimes he wants to beat the bullies. He got support from his parents He can't write like other students. He said, "I always feel a little insecure, but when a comment is passed on me, I become more agitated and start feeling even more insecure". Case 6 (A-28)'s experiences highlight the severe impact of bullying and a lack of supportive measures for students with learning disabilities. Despite having a supportive family, the hostile school environment and the inadequate response from school authorities have exacerbated his emotional and social struggles.

Conclusions:

On the basis of analysis and interpretation of data, the following conclusions can be laid down: When the researcher started to research this topic she had no idea about how much-disabled children are affected by their peers, their teachers, and the school environment, social and family environment. In general, the prevalence of bullying in Government secondary schools of Lucknow takes place. However, after the findings, the researcher's understanding has enriched towards bullying and the relation between SWDs at all dimensions of their school life. The cases revealed that in school they are not safe and it is a very serious matter because a child spends so much time after his/her

house in school. And there will always be a fear inside disabled students and because of it, they will not be able to study. In all cases which have been taken in this study, the researcher found that at so many points disabled children were bullied directly or indirectly. Directly they were misbehaved by their classmates such as naming the children with the kind of disability they have, calling them strange names, destroying their belongingness, and harassing them. At some point, their teacher also does these types of activities which hearts them most. Indirectly disabled students have been excluded from their peers, excluded from other activities like sports, and cultural programmes, not sitting with them, not sharing notes, not sharing their lunch with them and so many things like always making them feel like they're not like them, and keep them away from their group. The findings of the study show that there is a need for significant change in the way disabled students are treated in school.

The National Education Policy (2020) has been launched and implemented in many schools or is on the way to being implemented in so many schools. Yes, in this policy a lot has been talked about disability, and a lot has been talked about inclusivity. Yes, it also mentions how to treat disabled students but it does not mention how to treat bullied disabled students. Almost every third child in India is becoming a victim of bullying but there is no mention of bullying anywhere in this new education policy.

It has come to light that bullying is a substantial concern within our educational institutions, necessitating prompt action from the appropriate authorities to effectively tackle this issue. To facilitate the education of students with impairments without subjecting them to harassment from their peers, it is imperative to offer them specialized support under any circumstances.

Recommendations:

Recommendation for Policymakers:

- It was observed that there aren't any particular regulations in place at the moment for reporting bullying. They should think about it and take the initiative For the sake of the future of children. Evaluation and effective implementation of acts regarding bullying cases, the government should identify and remove the shortcomings of existing acts and rules if any.
- There is a lack of awareness and understanding regarding various provisions of bullying the results of the research also accept this fact as the researcher observed, therefore, wherever there are schools, government schools and all other types of

schools, these various provisions of anti-bullying should be publicized in the teacher-parent meeting.

- The Department of Health Research under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare by the guidance and regulation, can facilitate the implementation and use of a common definition of Bullying. When the Government recommends the definition of Bullying school campuses will know about it.
- Conduct a bullying survey with the express purpose of recording the experiences of protected students on school grounds, making sure to include Students with special needs.
- The government should organize various types of workshops related to provisions of bullying in educational institutions, and make efforts to spread awareness in the society by using posters, banners and publicity material.
- This type of research directly or indirectly works to spread awareness, hence the government should conduct various types of research related to bullying in educational institutions.
- Education Officers, Caregivers and bullying identification experts can be included in the School admin committee so that they can be involved for better identification of cases.
- If we observe the result of the study we find that SWD belongs to the low-income group of the family, hence the government will have to work towards finding the basic root of bullying.
- Expert for counselling of victims should be appointed in every school by the officials of PWD to ensure the education of SWDs children in a safe and secure environment.
- Many of the victim families were unhappy due to the disabilities of their children. A mass level of awareness for parents should be organized on the disability issue
- It was observed that there was not enough attention from the state government officials in the absence of a monitoring mechanism, in school, and lack of cooperation from the teachers & school administration policymakers should look over the issue
- An anti-bullying campaign can be conducted, incorporating various approaches such as plays, lectures on bullying, and documentaries that emphasize the message that everyone is the same inside. Furthermore, developing sensitivity and

giving more reinforcement to positive behaviours can contribute to a culture where bullying is not tolerated.

Recommendations for School Administrations:

- It was found that the majority of BSWD and SWD Children are highly affected by different types of bullying. Thus, assuring adherence to school rules and policies with respect to bullying may help in preventing cases of bullying.
- Schools have developed a set of school rules and policies to reduce cases of bullying in schools. Disciplinary measures should have been developed in schools to punish students who engage in and practice bullying.
- Schools to ensure all students and teachers adhere to the set of rules and regulations to reduce the cases of bullying. The study revealed that teachers are not cooperative. They should be cooperative with students and rules to avoid cases of bullying.
- The result is evident that BSWDs are not asking for so many things their demands are very small They should not be looked down upon, they should be treated like other children, they should also be given a chance to speak, and they should also be treated as people and the behaviour of their friends should change. School administration should think over the issue
- A disciplinary council should be available at school and is essential in punishing the perpetrators. If caught and proven as a perpetrator, the disciplinary council awaits you and you are punished according to the norms of the council.” Or A complaint cell should be established regarding bullying in every school
- All the school staff should be well trained in each and every type of disability and identification of bullying cases. Proper infrastructure for counselling rooms and as per type of disabilities should be made available in each school.
- School administration should listen to the voices of victims and consider them as a normal human being. Many of the victims have made complaints to the school administration but no complaints were taken by the school administration.
- To prevent bullying, schools can design intervention programs that include mindfulness activities and promote emotional intelligence. By encouraging students to take responsibility for their actions and developing a sense of cooperation, a positive environment can be established.

- Implementing a comprehensive intervention program that addresses the various factors contributing to bullying, such as promoting empathy with SWDs, teaching conflict resolution skills, fostering a positive school climate, and providing support for both the victims and the bullies, can lead to a significant reduction in bullying incidents and create a safer and healthier environment for everyone involved in the school community.

Recommendations for Teachers :

- A set of rules and policies concerning bullying are put in place and enforced. These rules are made clear to students and teachers that bullying is not allowed and there are clear consequences for those who break the rules. Any bullying behaviour is therefore punished accordingly.
- Teachers should understand when BSWD have any problems. Through these small demands, they understand that incidents of bullying will be less against them.
- The teacher's role is important for the Creation of a positive and inclusive school environment for disabled students. This involves fostering a culture of respect, empathy, and acceptance within the school community.
- Teachers should get sensitivity training to make sure they are prepared to handle the ethical and confidentiality requirements of handling a bullying allegation. Students might not know who to ask for help, thus it would be important for it to come from a reliable source.
- Educators can prevent bullying by implementing programs and initiatives that promote kindness, diversity, and positive social relationships among students and disabled students.
- Teaching students empathy and effective communication skills is also instrumental in preventing and addressing bullying towards disabled students.
- Teachers can create a culture of reporting, where students feel safe and supported in reporting incidents of bullying to school staff. And engaging parents and guardians in understanding and preventing bullying behaviour. Encourage open communication between home and school.
- By developing a sense of cooperation between students and by telling them that a disabled child has feelings just like you and taking responsibility for SWDs by peers or by teachers bullying can be prevented.

- Teachers can organize an anti-bullying campaign in schools and the nation. Through the campaign, children can understand how dangerous it can be.
- High level of supervision and implementing a comprehensive system of close monitoring and oversight within educational institutions, we can effectively prevent instances of bullying.
- Teachers can create a supportive and inclusive environment for students with disabilities (SWDs), which discourages bullying behaviours. Among peers along with the promotion of empathy, tolerance, and acceptance among students.

Recommendations for Parents:

- Parents should be aware of various concepts of bullying and disability. Through Expert A counselling session should be organized.
- Many of the victim families were unhappy due to the disabilities of their children. A mass level of awareness for parents should be organized on the disability issue.
- An anti-bullying campaign can be conducted, incorporating various approaches such as plays, lectures on bullying, and documentaries that emphasize the message that everyone is the same inside. Furthermore, developing sensitivity and giving more reinforcement to positive behaviours can contribute to a culture where bullying is not tolerated.

Educational Implications

The research findings of the present study will be of utmost importance in planning the prevention of bullying at school education of Children with different disabilities who are lagging behind socially, economically and emotionally in their education and suffering from bullying and studying in Govt. Schools in Uttar Pradesh face a lot of problems in their education due to bullying. On the basis of the obtained results, the following implications may be laid down: In the present study, it was found that the majority of the SWDs suffered extensive bullying in various forms. In light of the result School administration, teachers and policymakers can design some policies and programs Along with creating awareness among BSWDs, teachers and peers about bullying at the school. Teachers can take various initiatives to reduce bullying cases and organize awareness campaigns about the concept and type of bullying to create awareness among all the BSWDs so that every BSWDs can take the benefits. The government should provide proper training to teachers regarding various types of disabilities and bullying school administrators should take the responsibility to provide

a better educational, social and emotional environment to the BSWDs. The government and the education department can utilize this result to train the teachers and parents to create a conducive environment in the classrooms and at school through which the BSWDs children may feel elevated show good academic performance in academics and resolve their conflicts in an appropriate manner. The Government of Uttar Pradesh and heads/principals of the schools should take steps to look at all bullying cases in different schools as per the results suggested.

Recommendation for future research

- A very small sample (6 BSWDs cases) has been taken in this study the researchers suggest that it is possible that the same study will be carried out with a larger sample.
- This study has been conducted on a Government secondary school in the Lucknow district so the researchers' suggestion is the same study would be conducted to take private school students.
- This study has been conducted on a disabled student so the researcher's suggestion is the same study can be conducted on a normal child.
- It would be more interesting in future studies in school to know if only disabled children face bullying or if normal students also face bullying so normal students also be a part of the study.
- A national-level research might make a significant contribution to strengthening India's understanding of bullying in schools.
- Research is needed to explore the perceptions of policymakers on appropriate strategies that can be adopted in schools to reduce cases of bullying.
- Further, this study was qualitative in nature, which indicates future research with the use of other research methods like quantitative to determine whether bullying has a significant relationship with academic performance mental health and many other variables.

